

East Fork Lewis River Watershed

Breeze Creek

Breeze Creek drains south from the hills above La Center, through the east edge of town and out to the East Fork's flood plain at La Center Bottoms. The upper watershed includes a mix of woods, rural fields, and residences. Its lower reaches and its confluence with the East Fork Lewis River are near the City of La Center. Breeze Creek splits into two main branches, with the western branch named Breeze. Most of the creek flows through a moderately deep, wooded canyon. The Breeze Creek monitoring site is near its outlet to the East Fork. At this site, the stream health is rated poor, mainly based on high harmful bacteria counts. Otherwise it would rate fair.

Management objectives for Breeze Creek

- Finding and removing bacteria sources
- Limiting the effects of forest clearing
- Minimizing increased runoff from new construction as the drainage area is converted to urban and rural residential land uses.
- Maintaining forested stream channels to preserve and improve stream health.

Lower Rock Creek

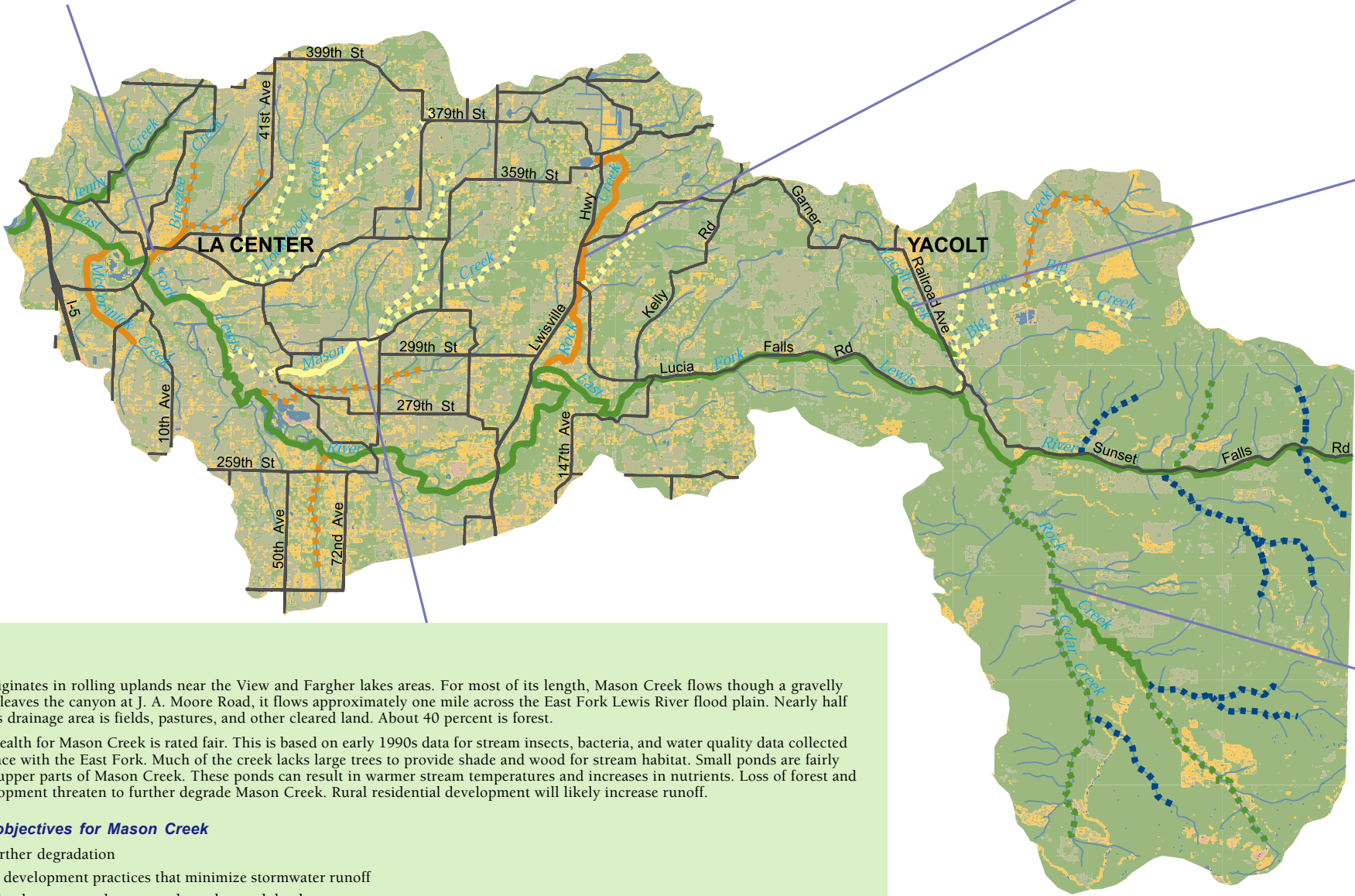
Lower Rock Creek (or Rock Creek North) begins from streams that flow through Fargher Lake. Fargher Lake is actually a former peat bog now used intensively as cropland. From Fargher Lake, the creek flows south roughly along State Road 503, then empties into the East Fork Lewis River upstream of Lewisville Park. Sections of Rock Creek often dry up during the summer, which is unusual for streams its size. About half of the basin is forested, ten percent is developed the remaining areas is pasture, fields, and farmland. Considering the percentage of forested land and the low amount of development, Rock Creek should have fairly good health. However, the creek's overall health is rated poor. The rating is based on water chemistry and relatively high concentrations of harmful bacteria. Rock Creek is listed by the state as not meeting water quality standards for fecal coliform. Sources of the creek's degradation probably include agriculture, residential development, and forest clearing.

Management objectives for Rock Creek

- Identifying the causes of its relatively poor health
- Restoring streamside trees and improving agricultural practices near the creek

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Stream Health 2003

Stream Health Ratings		Description	Land Cover Key	
	Excellent	Pristine, superior, or unsurpassed condition; minimal human disturbance		Forest
	Good	Healthy enough to support aquatic life and recreation		Grass/Shrubs
	Fair	Degraded but may support aquatic life and recreation		Residential/Recently cleared land
	Poor	Inferior health, poorly suited for aquatic life and recreation		Commercial/Industrial
	Very Poor	Severely degraded health; unsuitable for aquatic life or recreation		
	Unassessed	No data collected		
	Probable	Predicted stream health		



Yacolt Creek

Yacolt Creek starts in low hills west of Yacolt and flows south through forested swamp and wetlands along the west side of the Yacolt Valley. Less than a mile from its confluence with the East Fork Lewis River, Yacolt Creek drops through a steep rock canyon. The Yacolt Creek drainage area is mostly comprised of forested areas and pastures and fields. Less than ten percent of the area is developed. Although data collected in the early 1990s indicated that Yacolt Creek had good overall stream health, a 1998 report by the state listed Yacolt Creek as not meeting water quality criteria for bacteria. This listing is in part because Yacolt Creek (and the entire upper East Fork watershed) is held to a higher standard than most streams by the Washington Department of Ecology. Probable sources of degradation include runoff from cleared forest areas, fields, residences, and roads.

Management objectives for Yacolt Creek

- Protecting the watershed's current health
- Reforesting unused farm land
- Streamside tree planting
- Utilizing development techniques that minimize stormwater runoff

Mason Creek

Mason Creek originates in rolling uplands near the View and Fargher lakes areas. For most of its length, Mason Creek flows though a gravelly canyon. Once it leaves the canyon at J. A. Moore Road, it flows approximately one mile across the East Fork Lewis River flood plain. Nearly half of Mason Creek's drainage area is fields, pastures, and other cleared land. About 40 percent is forest. Overall stream health for Mason Creek is rated fair. This is based on early 1990s data for stream insects, bacteria, and water quality data collected near its confluence with the East Fork. Much of the creek lacks large trees to provide shade and wood for stream habitat. Small ponds are fairly common in the upper parts of Mason Creek. These ponds can result in warmer stream temperatures and increases in nutrients. Loss of forest and increasing development threaten to further degrade Mason Creek. Rural residential development will likely increase runoff.

Management objectives for Mason Creek

- Preventing further degradation
- Utilizing land development practices that minimize stormwater runoff
- Encouraging landowners to plant trees along the creek banks

Upper Rock Creek

Upper Rock Creek (or Rock Creek South) is the largest Clark County tributary of the East Fork Lewis River. It begins in forested areas of the Cascade Mountains and flows through Dole Valley into the East Fork above Moulton Falls. Much of Upper Rock Creek is within the forested land of the Yacolt Burn State Forest, and is managed by Washington Department of Natural Resources. This basin is nearly 90 percent forest, with some residential development in Dole Valley. Monitoring in Dole Valley indicates that stream health is good. It is probably excellent in the creek's forested headwaters. Any stream health problems tend to be associated with clearing for forestry activities and erosion from roads.

Management objectives for Upper Rock Creek

- Utilizing sound forest management practices
- Retaining forested areas on residential parcels